Spiritual Leadership

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CERTAIN events which have occurred in the past history of the Theosophical Society and certain events which are impending in the near future have caused and will cause much distress of mind to those who are interested in it, and who see in it one of the means whereby truth can reach the masses. A situation is rapidly coming about in which the Theosophical movement is threatened with serious attack from unfriendly outside instrumentalities. With difficulty a delay of a few months has been obtained, in a pending arraignment and exposure in the Public Press, in America. The damage to the cause of Theosophy from such attack would be enormous. If from inside the Society a sufficient number of members would realize clearly the nature of the difficulties which confront us perhaps such an eventuality might be averted.

The questions which many are asking are here given voice and some of the problems are ventilated. These questions and problems vitally concern all of us who are seeking to serve the race through the instrumentality of the Theosophical Society.

For the sake of clarity the problems may be expressed in the terms of three questions, which we can consider separately:

I. Why do so many movements of occult significance start apparently through the agency of discredited people?

II. Why do so many of the foremost occult thinkers and so many adherents of occult organizations go astray along moral lines?

III. Why do the Great Ones, the Guides of the race, utilize at times grossly imperfect instruments?

I. In reviewing the history of all movements for the betterment of humanity, certain things are apparent in practically all of them.

1. They start in a small way, and grow gradually to large proportions.

2. The founders of such movements are, in the majority of cases, abnormal. They often demonstrate powers which are not possessed by the average man; they are frequently morally notorious, and sometimes unbalanced mentally; and (except in the case of an avatar, such as the Christ or the Buddha) they are usually eccentric, nervously overwrought, or physically ill, weak, and subject to crises of varying kinds.

3. The schools of thought which they originate go through various stages, but during the earlier cycles and whilst the movement is endeavoring to take its rightful place in the world they have to fight their way into recognition along three lines:

(a) They have to struggle for survival first of all on the mental plane; they have to show their capacity to endure and their ability to persist against terrific odds. Every ideal which is seeking embodiment has to demonstrate its staying power in the face of opposition. Every ideal brought down from abstract to concrete levels has to take form and shape in mental matter, and the new vibration which is to accumulate substance and to create a form has to run counter to the old. The Masters, therefore, Who are endeavoring to sound the note that is needed for the new age have to look for two things in Their instruments: first, ability to hear the note, and capacity to vision the new ideal; and secondly, a certain tough fighting spirit and a certain willingness to be peculiar and to be considered unique which is to be found as a general rule only in those of a peculiar make-up and temperament, of a certain eccentricity of outlook, and of certain original views. Could this combination be found in the conservative normal man or woman gladly would they be employed, but their very conservatism forms a barrier, and their

sensitiveness prevents the full working out of the plan.

(b) When the idea has taken form on the mental plane, through the best agency available, then comes the second and the most dangerous stage. Many of the great movements have almost died at their inception on the astral plane. On the plane of the emotions the baby thought-form, which is an embodied ideal and which has been built and nurtured on mental levels by those who gave it its initiatory impulse, begins its struggle for life. *The greatest menace to any movement lies in the emotional bodies of its adherents.* Disaster faces every truly occult movement in the second generation through the uncontrolled natures and emotional indiscretions of the people who (with only small mentality but immense devotion and love) are willing to die for the leaders and the ideal. The objects of their unbalanced devotion are specified in the above order because it is characteristic of our Theosophical members to follow this sequence. They are carried away by an appreciation of the beauty of the ideal; they have no conception of the laws governing manifestation; they over-emphasize the personalities of their leaders and teachers, of the founders and originators; they work through loyalty to names and persons, and not from a realization of the truth involved and the principle embodied. They come into the line of the tremendous

fohatic or electric force which necessarily lies back of all movements emanating from a high level. In this last statement lies the key to the mystery of perversion along certain lines on the part of some of our leaders and members. Because of the magnitude of this electrical force, because in the majority of cases the emotional body and not the mental is the controlling factor, and because within the microcosmic system the corresponding fire is not directed to either the head or the throat center, but is turned towards the vitalizing of the physical functions or the heart center, they become either sex perverts or fanatical blind devotees, swayed by emotional impulse.

It is along these lines that disaster comes and it is right here that the movement is menaced. The life of the majority of its adherents is largely emotional; their attention is centered upon the defense or the attack of some personality; they are swept off their feet by partisanship and personality antagonisms and preferences. The true issues are lost sight of in a panorama of clashing personalities, and the voices which are sounding forth the cry of "Back to Principles and to Fundamentals" are drowned in the din of battle, and only the cry of leaders rallying their forces to *themselves* can be heard. This is a fact which needs our serious consideration.

(c) Should the idea survive the counter vibrations of

the mental plane, and should it escape shipwreck in the waters of the astral, it is very fairly sure of achieving its rightful place on the physical plane and of carrying out its mission. The physical dangers which threaten it lie along the line of financial obscurity, and of a struggle for the bread of existence. These are of relative unimportance, and can be overcome by those who understand the law and work for the three-fold unity in the three worlds of human endeavor.

To those who reason aright it is therefore plain that movements such as the Theosophical do not start with discredited people, even though on the physical plain and exoterically it may appear as if they did. They originate on abstract levels as far as we are concerned and are sent forth by Those Who have achieved and Who are the Servers of the race. They are then fathered by a peculiar type of person who is usually a mental type, functioning in a peculiarly responsive type of body. Their polarization is strongly mental even, as earlier said, to the point of overbalance. They are not usually emotional, but are transmitters of such force that their physical bodies frequently suffer,—the brain or the nerves being often the seat of trouble. After they have sponsored the new ideal on the mental plane the strong vibration initiated sweeps down through the astral, and necessarily agitates the weaker

majority, who become immediately foolish, unthinking, unbalanced adherents. The thought form is then in serious danger of annihilation. Should it survive the love of its worst enemies, its emotional friends, it will probably carry out its initial purpose.

It might perhaps be well to interpolate a comment here which—though fairly obvious—will bear re-emphasizing. H. P. B. was well aware of all this; hence her abhorrence of adoration and her lack of receptivity to the adulation of those who sought to make an idol of her. This accounted also for the strenuous mental stimulus and teaching she gave the few who gathered around her and which was the main characteristic of her E. S. methods. She sought to develop mental poise and control in her students and to teach them the rightful place of the emotions. We need above all to get back to the old lines, if we seek to save the Theosophical Society to which we belong; we need to teach men to think and to develop their mind bodies, and we must lead them to utilize the force which reaches them through the movement for constructive ends and not to expend it in an orgy of astral emotion and in a display of devotion to persons and forms. The thinkers who form the mental nucleus of any movement are numerically out of all proportion to the immense number of emotional adherents, and were it not that the

force back of the movement is of a very high order it would not survive its passage across from the mental to the physical plane.

H. In considering our second question: "Why do the leaders and students in occult movements err frequently along moral lines?" we must remember the vastness of the subject, the difficulty of forming an accurate judgment of the different individualities involved because of our lack of knowledge of past causes, and the fact that the personality affairs and the questions of right and wrong which concern our brother *do not concern us except in so far as they affect the group through his holding an official position and being in a place of power and influence.* We must search our motives carefully to see whether a proposed attack upon a leader or brother in a prominent position is based upon a dislike of his personality and a revolt against his personal life, or upon a real desire to serve the group or organization. In the latter case, love of our erring brother must be merged in love of the group, and action may then be necessitated which will eliminate him from prominence in group work; at the same time it is never forgotten that he is a unit in the group and the hand of fellowship is ever held out.

In answering this question we might enumerate some of the causes very briefly as follows: Leaders and students

in occult organizations go astray along sex lines for one or other of the fcllowing reasons:

1. The inflowing force over-stimulates them, and the fire of the physical body being already directed to the stimulation of the bodily functions, the result is that certain organs become over-vitalized, and—unless the man watches himself with the utmost care, and guards himself with meticulous caution—he becomes helpless. This sentence is in no sense an excuse or condonation of wrongdoing; with care and common sense the evil can be avoided and is avoided by many, but it explains why some fall who are seemingly so highly evolved that they might be expected to have surmounted that particular difficulty. They will pay the price in their own bodies and in their next incarnation. Being highly evolved they will then see clearly the working of the Law, and there will be added to the physical plane penalty, a recognition of its justice and a very real distress at its necessity, and at the frailty which produced such an effect. Could we but see that which lies ahead for those who have thus fallen, we might leave the law more readily to work, knowing that the Lords of Karma exact the last penny.

2. Being polarized astrally and emotionally controlled, and being likewise a good way along upon the path of evolution, they are meeting the "Dweller on the Thresh-

hold" in one of his forms. This is their old desire thought-form and the accumulated history of the fleshly impulses; it is still potent to call forth a response and they succumb. The sex life of the past is written in the astral light, and the old vibration re-awakens old longings and leads to sin. Owing to their ability to touch high levels, the sin is often glossed over by high excuses and religious reasons are given as a permit for abuses.

3. They go astray owing to a lack of all round or even development. Through ability to sense high vibration along a particular line and to respond to certain high ideals, they swing into the current of the new thought. Along many lines they have as yet far to go; their lower nature is as yet dominant and uncontrolled; theoretically they can grasp the vision, but the exoteric life on the physical plane is along old and (for them) normal lines; it measures not up to the inner recognition.

4. In a few cases, highly evolved men are in incarnation for two specific karmic purposes: First, to get rid of remaining fleshly desire, and through use and abuse, to pay the price of sin, and thus liberate themselves once and for all from the trammels of the flesh. This is a left-over from earlier lives, and may embody for them the working out of offense and their final Kurukshetra. Secondly, to suffer the loss of reputation and to be vilified (perhaps

justly) thus paying the penalty for a like vilification of others. If the Lords of Karma can combine these two purposes in one life, they enable a man to free himself more quickly and to cleanse himself from past offence.

We must refrain from judging, for all is not known by us. A man may be on the verge of high things, and nearing the hour of illumination, and yet fall to low depths. Emphatically, we must refrain from criticism; yet with equal emphasis it may be stated that it is not necessary for us to throw the weight of our influence and effort into the retaining of such an one in power or in office. If we do, the group may suffer through our emotional and sentimental interpretation of the word "brotherhood." Karmically he may be in power or in office, yet we may be karmically free from the act of keeping him there. This thought is to be commended to those who ponder the present situation, for it has a vital application.

We have studied somewhat the dangers which confront any new movement and also some of the perils which face the participators in the movement. We now come to our third question and can touch upon one or two points, which are really in the nature of an extension to what has been said in answer to our second question.

III. "Why do the Great Ones at times utilize grossly imperfect instruments?" This question in itself voices a

fallacy. The inference is that the Masters are engineering the movement and choosing Their representatives and workers as seems best to Them. Let us in this connection study what H. P. B. says in "The Key to Theosophy," page 236:

"The Masters do not guide the Society, not even the Founders; and no one has ever asserted that They did; They only watch over and protect it. This is amply proved by the fact that no mistakes have been able to cripple it, and no scandals from within, nor the most damaging attacks from without, have been able to overthrow it."

Comment on these words is needless, and one wishes that the successors of H. P. B. had kept the distinction as to their office as clearly defined as she did. It would have saved many a puzzled Theosophist much heart-searching.

People, through group affiliation and past association, are brought into the movement, and are available for use. The Great Ones working under the Law, use these potential energies, and make use of the capacities of the various human units in the group which They protect, to bring about certain results. These human focal points of energy are thus used for constructive ends, and if not thus used

might work dire havoc along destructive. This is a point of view which is sometimes forgotten and needs emphasizing. People under the Law and through group evolution are brought into incarnation with three types of karma to work out:

1. *Individual karma,* which should result in the transmutation of the lower into the higher, of personality tendency into egoic quality, and this must be done on the physical plane.

2. *Group karma,* which necessitates the transmutation of certain personal relationships into group capacity.

3. *The karma of the Thinker* on the mental plane, and in connection with his Ray group. This last type of karma is the one most frequently responsible for bringing a man (while in process of working out the other two) into situations wherein the Hierarchy have perforce to use him, in spite of his limitations.

Many souls at this stage are working out all these types of karma simultaneously and therefore come into prominence through their group relation, and the work they therefore are doing under the Hierarchy. That group relation, as is apparent to all students of T. S. tradition, is the cause of many mistakes, and the interaction between the personalities in the group leads to a frequent frustration of the plans of the Masters.

It might be helpful here if we paused to note that the success of any movement, such as the Theosophical, depends primarily upon four things:

1. The accuracy of the transmission of the egoic will or intent to the personality brain of the human beings who are swept into prominence and position in the movement. This accuracy of transmission is necessarily dependent upon:

(a) *The purity of the vehicle.* A mistake in the physical plane life may lead to the clogging of the channel and the consequent failure to transmit accurately from the higher to the lower. This point is particularly pertinent at this time, when the weight of final authority on occult or psychic questions is given to the statements of one whose personal life for years has been and still remains, the subject of widespread censure and attack, though with how much truth is for each to judge for himself.

With the utmost earnestness it must be affirmed that—in view of this potent factor in transmission—psychic utterance unless backed by purity of life, spirituality of outlook, and an example of devoted service carries in it the seeds of dire disaster, and the misleading of many.

(b) *Steadiness of vibration,* or the ability to control the desire-nature. It should be borne in mind that the term "desire-nature" covers a large range of emotions, from

physical plane appetite of a sensual nature to the longing for personality glorification, and many forms of pride.

(c) *Mind control.* This involves the capacity to use the mind as an interpreter of the intuition. In other words, all occult leaders need sound common-sense and a fine sense of proportion; upon such a foundation should they build.

2. The willingness of the leaders to enunciate principles and to keep their personalities in the background. All Hierarchical and occult effort concerns itself with the subjective life and necessitates always the relinquishment of that which is objective. This is a point which has been often forgotten by certain of the prominent leaders in the Theosophical movement. They have not sounded forth the principle involved; they have sounded a personality note and the principle has been lost sight of; or they have only enunciated the principle in so far as it might effect their own prestige and enhance their own position. This failure to sound the right note and to work from within outwards is never so apparent in the early days of a movement; later on, when the emotional idolatry of the average member has done its dire work the personality gradually comes to the front and the principle withdraws into the background. The true occult leader is known by the following characteristics:

(a) He makes no claims for himself or for his fellow-workers. He avoids the declaration of his place within or without the Hierarchy, remembering that his inner relationship is demonstrated by work accomplished and not by verbal statement. Where such claims are issued the listening multitude would do well to reserve opinion till the so-called initiate has demonstrated by the beauty of his life, the wisdom of his judgments, and the strenuousness of his service the truth of the announcement. We are inundated at this time by such claims made on behalf of many of mediocre attainment, and the trumpet is always sounding forth and calling our attention to some personality. Are these things right? Is this the way the truly Great Ones work? "I am among you as he that serveth," said the Master of all the Masters, and no greater declaration can be made. The avoidance of claims is the mark of the true occult leader.

(b) He ever points the way to the God within, and teaches the laws of self-development; he avoids attracting attention to himself, either as one who has fulfilled those laws, or as one who knows more about them than his hearers. The authority with which he speaks is seen in the clarity of his thought, the lucidity of his exposition, and the brotherliness of his life and speach. These are characteristic of the true occult leader.

(c) He states principles and does not concern himself with personalities; he is vitally concerned with the manipulation of the human equation, and he is occupied with the strenuous endeavor to provide full scope for the varied talents and capabilities of the personnel of his group; he spends his time pushing into prominence all who have something to *give*. He is not interested in pushing himself to the foreground. The most valued worker and leader is the one who can wisely employ the greatest number of people, thus utilizing their energy in constructive endeavor, and extracting from those with whom he is associated the maximum of service for the alleviation of the ills of humanity. This involves ability to use people according to their capacity on whichever plane is most suitable, and thus to avoid that duplication of effort which is the fruitful source of the clashing of personalities. This is a thing which has not been done by some of our leaders. They do not work as do the Masters from behind the scenes, driving men to the forefront of organization work, and causing them—through appreciation and the providing of opportunity—to display the full extent of their ability. The true occult leader does not care whether he is known or unknown; he produces effects by leading men to find out for themselves what they are capable of accomplishing, and they then produce results through their own

realized ability, and not because someone, calling himself a leader, has given certain orders.

3. The due appreciation of the factor of time and of opportunity. Many movements go astray because of precipitate action and haste on the part of a leader to force upon the members certain activities for which due preparation has not been made, and for which sufficient evidence of value is lacking. In all movements which are guided on the physical plane by people, who are bridges between the unseen and the seen, such appreciation is very frequently lacking. They have a certain amount of prevision; they realize the magnitude of certain approaching events, but their appreciation of time is at fault. They spring upon their constituents certain information without due attention to guarantee, to method, to opportunity, and to agency employed. Disaster ensues, and many are misled. Our T. S. members can recall many instances where this has occurred in the past and should be therefore warned as to the future. Surely these things should not be, and surely through them is approaching that period of sectarianism which H. P. B. feared and dreaded for the movement.

4. Lack of appreciation by our leaders of the need of stern self-discipline, and the need of "abstaining from all appearance of evil" in their own individual lives, in view of

the tremendous and undue effect their lives and words have upon the bulk of the membership. There is no need for us to enlarge upon this.

It must therefore be apparent to all clear thinking Theosophists that the Theosophical Society is in danger on all of these four points. Claims of a high stage of evolution, have been made by some of our leaders, emphasis has been laid upon personality and not upon principle; the true occult obedience, based on spiritual recognition, has been degraded into obedience to people who proclaim aloud to the world that they are members of the Hierarchy and demand obedience because of that claim; the physical plane life of some of them has not measured up to the standard of the man in the street, and some of those who have been announced as initiates have been stated to be within measurable distance of criminal proceedings. The result upon the Society at this time is disastrous and the earnest in all parties and sections are asking themselves what is wrong. They enquire within themselves as to whether even the Great Ones Themselves may not be in error. They cannot reconcile their ideals with some of the instruments that the Masters seem to use.

We should bear carefully in mind when pondering on these problems that even the Great Ones Themselves do

not know how a man will re-act under the pressure of circumstance. Many are the leaders who start out aright and who seem to have the strength of character to endure unto the end who collapse under the impact of force which pours through their vehicles; who lose their sense of proportion under the adulation and foolish adoration of the simple; who lose sight of the work in centering their attention upon themselves and upon the way they do the work, and, forgetting to swing many into action and thus multiply their efforts, bring to the aid of the Masters one instead of many; who, through their ability to contact the higher planes, are over-stimulated, and (failing to turn this stimulation into group energy and to dissipate its force in group love and work) go to pieces along sexual lines.

Again the Masters cannot tell how the inter-action between units in a group and the effect of group karma will effect a man, and many a good worker has "fallen into sin" through the effect upon him of those other personalities with whom he may have been associated in other lives. Through force of habit, their influence is over strong, and again he succumbs to an old failing. He follows the lines of least resistance, and temporarily, (because he has laid his emphasis upon his personality instead of upon principle) many of his followers stumble and the organization is endangered.

Such is the situation today, and nothing is gained by denying it or glossing it over. The ruthless light of day is what is needed and a realization that different forms of pride, immorality, the making of claims, and the veiling of principle have all combined to bring about a very dangerous condition. What, therefore, is the line of duty? Is final disaster inevitable? Must the Masters withdraw Their protection? Can They no longer use the Society as an instrument? How shall we change the present condition of affairs? How shall we bring order out of chaos?

The change will be brought about when every member realizes his responsibility to think clearly and truthfully, to shoulder his own burdens, and to resort to that final court of appeal his own inner God. This present trouble will have been well worth while if it serves to drive our people back upon themselves, and to find that God within, Who is the repository of truth, and Who can guide them out of error into the light of truth. The change will be brought about by the use of sound common-sense and by the endeavor of the members—as individuals and as a group—to do the following things:

1. To study the principles upon which the movement is based and to sound them forth in no uncertain tone.

2. To remain steady no matter what occurs, remember-

ing that optimism and hopefulness produce constructive effects while pessimism is a destructive factor.

3. To refuse to be influenced by the claims of any individual, bearing in mind that this question of discipleship and of initiation is a purely personal matter and relationship, and that exoterically all that we are concerned with is ability to serve, and type of service. Response to the call to service must be based on a realization of world need, on the recognition of the ability of certain people and organizations to meet that need, and on the capacity of different men and women to interpret the ideal on abstract levels and bring about its concretion.

4. To reject as leaders, by due official methods and at the proper time under the constitution, those who do not measure up to standard. This should be brought about in a dignified manner, refraining from abuse and personality invective. Through legal methods of election, and the wise organization of all preliminary effort, others should be elected in their place.

5. To teach steadily the truths of the Wisdom Religion and this without intermission. Work will thus be provided for all and the right principles and ideals will be enunciated. Through the right education of public opinion the adjustment of our troubles will surely come.

In conclusion let us recognize the need of steadily

holding out the hand of brotherhood to all erring brothers, whilst at the same time we refrain from perpetuating them in office and from putting power in their hands. Let us not be swept away from our basic principle of brotherhood. We can love our brother while detesting his sin; we can remember that when one member in the body corporate suffers all the members suffer with him; we can therefore grieve with him and stand beside him in the difficult road which lies before him; and we can keep him within our ranks and make him feel his relationship to us while at the same time we eliminate him from a position of influence or of power.

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